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ABSTRACT

In order to develop an understanding of the history of childhood, an interdisciplinary approach is needed. Such an analysis presents special challenges, since different traditions of inquiry and interpretation generate different research questions and correspondingly divergent versions of the past and its relationship to the present. At this point the phrase "history of childhood" means different things to different people. To Philippe Aries ("Centuries of Childhood") it means understanding how the concept of childhood emerged culturally as a separate stage of human development. Aries has been heavily criticized for not fully considering the relationship of socioeconomic conditions and ideological trends and transformations. A different point of view comes from those who take a psychohistorical perspective, which emphasizes the effect of different childrearing styles and environmental characteristics on child development. The third perspective comes from authors who stress the relationship of demographic, economic, and sociological factors to the emergence of modern beliefs and practices concerning children. In order for a complete understanding of the history of childhood to emerge, all these perspectives must be considered. A seven-page list of project research papers concludes the document. (IS)

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Some Issues in the Historiography of Childhood and Youth

Suzanne R. Kirschner

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Two recent articles which review research on the "history of childhood" both have titles which suggest that this field of inquiry is in its "infancy" or "youth." Playful as such choice of words may be, its wit also rings true. For, thus far, this area appears to be characterized by a lack of integration of perspectives, and an incompleteness of development, which do indeed bespeak an "immature" condition.

In addition to its relatively recent birth, there are other factors which contribute to the somewhat chaotic and unintegrated state of this pursuit. Questions about how children and youth were perceived and treated in the past have, during the last twenty years or so, attracted the attention of scholars in several disciplines -- including social and demographic historians, developmental and psychoanalytic psychologists, and literary critics -- and, not surprisingly, these investigators do not function in automatic accord with one another with respect to their foci of study, critical vocabularies, and choice of methodologies. A given scholar (i.e. Philippe Aries) may describe his work as an examination of the generalized "sentiments" -- ideas or concepts -- of childhood which are shared by the adults of particular eras, while other investigators see themselves as focusing on the history of the actual relationship between parents and children, and its effect on the inner experience and personality development of the growing child during different periods (e.g. David Hunt, Kenneth Keniston, Lloyd DeMause). Yet another cluster of researchers (itself diverse in composition) is concerned primarily with how changing economic and social-structural conditions have influenced, and are reflected in, how we perceive and organize the lives of children and youth (e.g. Musgrove, Gillis, Bakan, Kett, et al.). To further complicate

matters, few of these theories conform exactly and exclusively to one of the three "ideal types" of research just described: these differences in focus and method are relative, and in most cases there is some overlap or possibility of partial translation.

Given the divergent theoretical perspectives of the investigators, questions about the existence of "childhood" and "adolescence" prior to modern times get framed in several different ways. When sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt insists that youth groups have existed and been recognized from time immemorial, the question becomes, how has the universal category of "youth" changed as a result of the urban-industrial transformation? Ariès, on the other hand, starts from our current conceptions of "childhood" and "adolescence" and infers from his investigations the total absence, in medieval society, of these life stages. Psychohistorians use as their yardstick assumptions about universal patterns and/or values of human development and potential, so that their questions are often framed in terms of whether a particular stage of development was manifest during a given era (e.g., did Erikson's adult stage of "generativity" exist in early modern France?).

Finally, even the cultural backgrounds of the theorists themselves can be seen as a source of dissonance, contributing to

(continued next page)

differences in perspective, perception and interpretation. For example, Richard Vann (an American historian) suggests that Oxonian Adrian Wilson's critique of Ariès's "present-centered" approach (i.e., he faults Ariès for interpreting the past solely in terms of how it differs from the present) is not a reflection of Wilson "professionalism" as opposed to Ariès's "amateurism" but rather reflects a difference "between Anglo-Saxon empiricism and the model-building approach to social reality characteristic of continental thought."[1]

In short, the phrase, "history of childhood" appears, at present, to mean different things to different people. It is not the purpose of this paper to attempt to resolve these ambiguities and failures of communication, but rather only to demonstrate their existence as I describe several of the dominant approaches which have been used to explore various questions about childhood and chidren in history.

1. Philippe Ariès and his critics

Our point of departure in this examination of some ways of looking at childhood-in-history will be what is still the best-known work associated with the field: Philippe Ariès's Centuries of Childhood. The English translation of this book was published in 1962. Virtually no one -- least of all historians -- entirely agrees with Ariès's treatment of the nature of medieval attitudes and practices towards children or with his depiction of the transformation from medieval to modern beliefs and institutions. Nevertheless, although "he did not cultivate what he first explored," and "misconceived some of its basic features," Richard Vann points out that "he was there first,"[2] and thus, insofar as there is a dialogue, it is most often Ariès whom people are answering. First I shall present his central argument; this will be followed by some criticisms which have been made of his work.

Ariès's focus is on traditional France and the transition in that country from medieval to modern views of the nature of childhood, as well as the relationship of these views to changing perceptions and functions of the family and education. As evidence for his conclusions, he draws mainly on paintings, toys, clothing, written sources, and categories present (or absent) in language.

When Ariès states categorically that "in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist"[3] he means that there was no "awareness of the particular nature of childhood...which distinguishes the child from the adult, even the young adult." He suggests that there was an ideology of indifference vis à vis children. Until the age of seven, since he was "too fragile as yet to take part in the life of adults, the infant simply 'did not count.'"[4] According to Ariès, "this indifference was a direct and inevitable consequence of the demography of the period"[5] -- i.e., the high infant-mortality rate.

It is important to note here that by "indifference," Ariès does not seem to mean utter neglect of, or lack of emotional attachment to, infants and young children. He explicitly states that "the idea of childhood is not to be confused with affection for children."[6] Both attachment to one's offspring, and pleasure derived from "watching children's antics and 'coddling' them" are seen by Ariès as most likely having been felt always, at least "by women, women whose task it was to look after children -- mothers and nannies....Children's little antics must always have seemed touching to mothers, nannies and cradle-rockers, but their reactions formed part of the huge domain of unexpressed feelings."[7] Ariès's use of the term "indifference"

appears to signify a "public" attitude about the nature and importance of the individuality and personality of the young child. Thus Ariès appears to make a distinction between shared, public expressions of cultural values -- the "sentiments" or mental structures which he emphasizes -- and the realm of "private, unexpressed feelings."

To return to his main argument: Ariès contends that, after infancy, "in the Middle Ages, at the beginning of modern times, and for a long time after that in the lower classes, children were mixed with adults as soon as they were considered capable of doing without their mothers or nannies, not long after a tardy weaning (in other words, at about the age of seven). They immediately went straight to the great community of men, sharing the work and play of their companions, young and old alike."[8] Thus, according to his view, there was no idea, during medieval times, of "a difference and a transition between the world of children and that of adults, a transition made by means of an initiation or an education. Medieval civilization failed to perceive this difference and therefore lacked this concept of transition."[9]

David Hunt points out that "Aries bases his interpretation on a particular view of medieval society," seeing it as "one unique social body which embraced the greatest possible variety of ages and classes and in which moral distances took the place of physical distances."[10] Concomitant with this different structure of medieval society was a different relationship of the family to society and a different sense of the family's function: "In these crowded, collective existences there was no room for a private sector. The family... ensured the transmission of life, property and names; but it did not penetrate very far into human sensibility."[11]

However, asserts Aries, from the fourteenth century on, things began to change:

> From the fourteenth century on, there had been a tendency to express in art, iconography and religion ...the personality which children were seen to possess, and the poetic, familiar significance attributed to their special nature....(I)n the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the child and infant -- at least in the upper classes of society -- was given a special costume which marked him out from the adults....A new concept of childhood had appeared in which the child, on account of his sweetness, simplicity and drollery, became a source of amusement and relaxation for the adult.[12]

The attitude described above is called the "coddling" attitude ("mignotage") by Aries, and he says it originated among the upper classes, within the family, beginning at the end of the sixteenth century. This trend was soon joined by another, seemingly contradictory attitude towards children, one in which the "fondness for childhood and its special nature no longer found expression in amusement and 'coddling,' but in psychological interest and moral solicitude."[13]

> The 'coddling' attitude towards children is even better known to us by the critical reactions it provoked at the end of the sixteenth century and particularly in the seventeenth century....This feeling of exasperation was as novel as 'coddling.' It was the beginning of a felt need to keep children from adults....[14]

And while

> The first concept of childhood -- characterized by 'coddling' -- had made its appearance in the family circle, in the company of little children....the second, on the contrary, sprang from a source outside the family: churchmen or gentlemen of the robe, few in number before the sixteenth century, and a far greater number of moralists in the seventeenth century, eager to ensure disciplined, rational manners. They too had become alive to the formerly neglected phenomenon of childhood, but they were unwilling to regard children as charming toys, for they saw them as fragile

> creatures of God who needed to be both safeguarded and reformed. This concept in its turn passed into family life.
>
> In the eighteenth century, we find those two elements [coddling and moral concern/pedagogical attitude] in the family, together with a new element: concern about hygeine and physical health....[15]

He suggests that in France, by the middle of the eighteenth century -- among the more prosperous classes -- "everything to do with children and family life has become a matter worthy of attention. Not only the child's future but his present and his very existence are of concern: the child has taken a central place in the family."[15a]

A symptom of the emergence of these new attitudes was the appearance of a literature directed specifically to children. In his article about the birth of children's literature in France, Ariès explains that "books addressed to and reserved for children appear at the end of the seventeenth century, at the same time as the awareness of childhood."[16] He asserts that it was at this time that the upper classes repudiated their connection (as adults) to "popular literature of medieval origin," to the "fairy tales which never ceased to nourish the popular literature of the peddlers."[17]

> This handing down to children of themes common to all of society took place in two separate stages. First, at the end of the sixteenth century and during the first half of the seventeenth century, the new nobility, the men of the Robe, gave up the old fund of the 'marvelous' which had nourished medieval literature....[18]

"Why, then," asks Aries, did these marvelous tales reappear in the guise of children's stories?" His answer is that "it had not been such a long time since people had abandoned them, and one can see that there was a certain nostalgia in the return, no doubt for the reasons given by Leibniz:

> It is one of man's misfortunes that he becomes weary of reason itself and bored with the light of truth. Chimaeras come back and are welcomed once again because they are of the realm of the marvelous.

"But at the end of a century of rationality the 'chimaeras' could no longer return without an alibi, and the child furnished that alibi: this is the essential fact."[19]

According to Aries, the development towards child-centeredness was a stimulus for the new role and organization of education: "The notion of childhood was expanded beyond infancy, through school age and even into adolescence," and therefore, beginning in the late 16th and early 17th centuries:

> to guide this newly-created group of 'children,' the institution of the college was reformed specifically for their care....In the Middle Ages, schools were simply placet where Latin was taught....However, with the lengthening of childhood, the college became an instrument of discipline. No longer an adult among his peers, the student was now considered a child and as such was deprived of his autonomy.[20]

The notion of adolescence was born, he asserts, during the second half of the 18th eighteenth century, with "the rise of the military idea... inside school life:

> This change doubtless corresponded to the position which the army was beginning to assume in society, which it was to lose in France at the Restoration, only to resume it after an interval of half a century under the Second Empire, and which it has never lost in Central Europe. ....The new interest shown in the officer and the soldier brought about a vague but definite correlation between early adolescence and the typical soldier.... pedagogues henceforth attributed a moral value to unifrom and discipline.[20a]

Finally, even the changes in family structure and the relation of the family to society are seen by Aries to have resulted from "the desire to provide the child with a safe and well-regulated living space:"

> During the Middle Ages, the nuclear family was a relatively insignificant institution as compared with the 'extended kinship group' . Gradually, however, the family became more important. The sentimental bonds uniting its members grew tighter,

> and the family turned inward, slowly pulled people inside the home where individuals now spent most of their time, regarding the outside world with suspicion or indifference.[21]

Ariès even posits that "Malthusianism or birth control....made its appearance in the eighteenth century, just when the family had finished organizing itself around the child, and raised the wall of private life between the family and society." [22]

Ariès links these changes in family organization and role to "the class structure of French society."[23] The "coddling" attitude, as we have seen, is held to have originated with the old aristocracy and upper classes. Yet from the eighteenth century onwards, "it was the bourgeoisie which defined the new style of domesticity and then gradually imposed it on all of society."[24] He says that "there came a time when the middle class could no longer bear the pressure of the multitude or the contact of the lower class. It seceded..." in the manner described above, in order to keep itself "free from all lower-class contamination."[25] Modern social life has been characterized by the imposition and diffusion of the middle-class ideal of the child-centered family onto other sectors of society, which thus have come by the above-described beliefs and practices much more recently.

In short, Ariès presents a model in which childhood (and, later, adolescence) became progressively separated and differentiated from adulthood. This stimulated changes in the view and function of the family (which became more private and sheltering and withdrawn from society) and of education (which came to serve more of a moralizing and disciplinary function and was seen at once to withdraw the child from adult society and to promote transition to it).

Critiques of Centuries of Childhood

The responses and elaborations which have been stimulated by Centuries of Childhood contain criticisms which, for the most part, can be condensed into a few basic themes: (1) that what we call "childhood" and "adolescence" are not exclusively "modern" phenomena; (2) that Ariès has been remiss in his selection and/or interpretation of his evidence and (3) that he does not attend to the social, economic, political and/or (additional) cultural context in which these "sentiments" of childhood existed and were transformed.

The "most vulnerable" aspect of Ariès's argument, according to Richard Vann, is his assertion that attitudes, practices and institutions which we associate with "modern" childhood and adolescence did not exist before the 1600s. A frequently-cited example of an attempt to demonstrate otherwise is historian Natalie Zemon Davis's article, "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France." Davis studied "the character of misrule in the French countryside and in the late middle ages and sixteenth century" and concluded that here was evidence to refute Ariès's contention "that Europeans made no distinction between childhood and adolescence, before the end of the eighteenth century."[26] She contends, on the contrary, that "though villagers obviously had no theory of the psychodynamics of male adolescent development and though rural society did not stimulate the possibility of exploring alternate identities [the moratorium concept of Erikson's developmental psychology] nevertheless these youth groups played certain of the functions we attribute to adolescence." In her attempt to demonstrate the importance of age categories or age groups in the traditional rural community in Europe, she draws on

the framework of sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt. This framwork is "universalist" (as opposed to "historicist" or "relativist") in the sense that Eisenstadt poists that there is some notion of childhood and, especially, of the adolescent transition ("youth") in all societies, while at the same time he acknowledges that "the limits and characteristics of such categories have by no means remained constant through the centuries." [27]

Studies which have demonstrated points similar to Davis's (i.e. that recognizable attitudes towards youth, and organizations designed to accomodate this age group, existed during medieval and early modern times) include Stephen Smith's study of seventeenth-century London apprentices, Georges Duby's work on the category of "youth" (juventus) in twelfth-century France, and Irene Q. Brown's contention that concepts of both childhood and adolescence can be found in both the theories and the educational practices of the Renaissance Italian humanists.

With regard to childhood, Urban Holmes -- on the basis of his study of medieval literature -- "questioned the view that there was no distinctive conception of childhood in the middle ages." Holmes contended that "there is no lack of evidence in the literature of a strong family tie between the married pair and their children. It is true, nonetheless, that there were many additional people in the household.... But the medieval and early modern man was aware of who was of the blood and who was not."[28] In other words, there is evidence that both the concept of childhood as a distinct and pampered stage of life, and the idea of the importance of the nuclear family, existed long before Aries says they came into being.

Holmes says that "what Aries writes about the Middle Ages depends

largely upon secondary material and this should be supplemented by more consideration of actual texts," [29] which is what Holmes proceeds to do in his article. Another group of criticisms which Ariès receives for the way he has selected and treated evidence is leveled at him by Adrian Wilson. Wilson argues that Ariès tends to confuse the conventions of representation in a given medium, with the attitudes which (according to his reading of them) they are supposed to represent. For example, he faults Ariès for drawing conclusions from artistic representations since

> The interpretation here rests on the assumption that art reproduces directly the ways of life of the time.... yet the nature of art is not an historical constant.... It is not the attitudes of people at large, but the forms and features of art which changed....Therefore what is lacking in the exposition is any analysis of iconographic evidence. Instead of a rigorous and comparative breakdown of the content and form of the various iconographies,..the evidence is not analyzed: it is reproduced...with little examination of the social processes by which this evidence was created. [30]

Wilson points out that this criticism would seem to weaken Ariès's notion of the "mingling of the ages" in everyday social life during the Middle Ages: "It is...only in iconography that the 'mingling of the ages' can take on the diffuse and innocent character Aries ascribes to it." [31]

Similarly, Wilson cautions that we not confuse the advent of coddling with the advent of printing! He suggests that "mignotage (coddling) does not necessarily appear in the sixteenth century; it merely enters the universe of printed sources....it is...plausible to infer that [the development of printing] is responsible for its entry into sources -- not change in willingness to express it." [32]

These may seem like technical and trivial points, but what they all point to is the criticism that Ariès has not paid attention to the actual particulars of what went on before 1600, in either "sentiment" or practice. As Richard Vann puts it, "The model's

historicist component remains abstract, because the 'second model' [the pre-modern model of childhood/youth] has not been adequately fleshed out; it is merely defined by absence of traits found in the present."[33] So that, for example, in the absence of "the modern system of age-segregated achool education" there is concealed an unexplored "presence...in the form of the apprenticeship system, of a different way of maintaining relations between the ages."[34]

The final type of criticism of Ariès to be considered in this section suggests that his approach is seriously deficient in its neglect of social/economic/political (and even religious and intellectual) contextual factors -- that he does not gound in a broader socio-economic context his description of the evolution of attitudes, practices and institutions associated with childhood; nor does he address the issue of a possible causal relationship between these other arenas and the ideologies of childhood, family and school which he describes.

This criticism, offered by Adrian Wilson and others, may be a bit exaggerated. For in fact there are some connections drawn in Centuries of Childhood and "At the Point of Origin" (the article on the birth of children's literature) which relate these ideologies to other historical conditions. For example, there is the linkage of the "indifferent" attitude to the high infant mortality rate; the assertion that children's literature came into being when an age of philosophical rationalism and religious (Counter-) Reformation pushed "the realm of the marvelous" out of the domain of acceptable adult entertainment; and the implication that the "moralizing" and pedagogical forces which mobilized against "coddling" were, at least in part, agents of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In addition, he stresses the

role of the bourgeoisie as the modern carriers of the child-centered ideology. Yet it is true nonetheless that there is a "disembodied" quality to his intimations of the roles played by various interests, powers and forces.

In short, one needs to look elsewhere for approaches which address more fully, explicitly and accurately the relationship between socio-economic conditions and ideological trends and transformations. A few such approaches will be examined in Section 3 of this paper. First, however, let us explore briefly a set of alternative attempts to probe the "deep structure" of parent-child relations across diverse historical settings: the "psychohistorical" approaches.

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2. Psychohistorical Perspectives

John Demos, in his article, "Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood," contrasts the Psychohistorical approach with that of Ariès:

> [Ariès] has concentrated not so much on the actual life-experience of children in the past as on the prevalent attitudes toward and about these children. In this sense, Centuries of Childhood is primarily about adults -- those who commissioned and painted the portraits, wrote and read the medieval treatises, and designed and maintained the schools.
>
> Another form of the study of childhood....is an effort to find certain uncerlying themes in the experience of childhood in a given culture or period in order to throw some light on the formation of later personality. [35]

Such approaches (related in aim and method to some of the Culture and Personality theories in anthropology) advocate the use of contemporary Western psychoanalytic and developmental psychological theories to analyze the effects on the personality formation of the developing child of the different childrearing styles and environments characteristic of different historical periods. Shaped by historical contingencies, the individual is also seen to play an active role in shaping his/her society:

> As opposed to the approach of Ariès, in which the chld is seen as 'a kind of mirror which focuses and reflects cultural themes of central importance.... [in this framework] the child becomes not just a mirror, not only the creature, but also the creator of culture and in this sense a dynamic force in his own right.[36]

Kenneth Keniston is one such social scientist who has proposed a marriage of psychology and history as a way of addressing variation across different historical and cultural contexts, and also as a means of accounting for social change. Distinguishing "psychological development" from universals such as biological maturation and socially-defined age-grading, he asserts that true development "can be defined

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as a process of qualitative change in functioning, in relationship to the world, or to oneself,"[37] and his hypothesis is that "human development from infancy onward is contingent upon the characteristics of the environmental matrix."[38] The method which he proposes for the study of the history of childhood and youth, therefore, is to look at different environments "in terms of their selective impact on the unfolding of development potentials."[39] Once we do this, he argues, we'll see that "some societies and periods of history may 'create' stages of life that do not exist in other societies; some societies may 'stop' human development in some sectors far earlier than other societies 'choose' to do so..."[40] and so on. As a "speculative example" of this type of analysis, Keniston offers an Eriksonian analysis of Ariès's contention that "the concept of childhood as a separate stage of life was unknown during the Middle Ages:

> ...the developmental 'task' of childhood in Erikson's terms is the achievement of a sense of 'industry,' which Erikson relates to such human qualities as skill, a sense of workmanship, an absence of feelings of inferiority, and a sense of vocational competence. We might argue that in the absence of a stage of childhood, the psychological quality of industry simply did not develop on a mass scale, and that its absence thus helps to explain the absence of the motivations necessary for an entrepreneurial, capitalistic-industrial society. Perhaps only as childhood was recognized on a mass scale and as a larger proportion of the population therefore developed a sense of industry could capitalism and large-scale industrialization proceed. Such an explanation might help us define the developmental component in the complex relationship bewteen capitalism, Protestantism, and the work ethic. [41]

There would seem to be an unacknowledged contradiction in Keniston's attempt to "decenter" from "the widespread psychological assumption that the innate 'thrust' of human development is so intense that development cannot be stopped by any merely 'cultural' or historical factor."[42] For, although he sees his approach as an

attempt to recognize and account for the effects of environmental diversity, in fact he approaches these diverse historical and cultural environments, and the individuals whose developments they affect, with a concept of human potential which is strictly limited by the parameters of contemporary Western developmental psychology.

This basic tension between the universalism of psychohistorical theories and the historicism (at least in spirit) of Ariès's approach, is expressed by David Hunt, whose Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France is an attempt to integrate both orientations:

> In one sense, Ariès complements Eriksonian theory. Childrearing is indeed influenced by sociological realities. In fact, the treatment of children is related to family organization and, beyond that, to fundamental social, ideological and political changes in the character of European society. At the same time, this historical interpretation challenges a basic tenet of Erikson's system. The concern for children, which he seems to assume is a part of human nature, the generativity all adults manifest in some form, is for Ariès a historical phenomenon, what he calls solicitude for children, a singularly modern development....For Ariès, Erikson's work, indeed all psychoanalysis, with its exaggerated concern for the welfare of the infant, is far from being a universal theory of personality, but is instead the product of our own particular, and transitory, way of looking at children.[43]

The most radical of the psychohistorical theorists is Lloyd DeMause, editor of the Journal of Psychohistory (formerly the History of Childhood Quarterly). Richard Vann calls his "psychogenic theory of history" "the most extensive effort to provide an alternative framework [to Ariès's] of the development of childhood."

> He views the changes in personality occurring because of successive generations of parent-child interactions as the central force for change in history. Basically concerned with psychological evolution, the idea is that in each generation parents regress to the psychic age of their children and work through better a second time their own childhood conflicts. The result over the centuries is increasing closeness between parent and child -- closeness in the sense of empathy and respect for individuality.[44]

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DeMause holds that three basic psychological mechanisms underlie the history of how parents have related to their children: the "projective" and "reversal" reactions -- predominant during most of history -- and the "empathic" response, which seems to be coming increasingly to the fore. These mechanisms have been present in various strengths and combinations in parents' attitudes about and treatment of their children throughout history, which is characterized by a progressive "amelioration" of parental responses to their children (and therefore of the personalities, and capacity to respond to <u>their</u> children, of each successive generation). DeMause offers the following chronology to describe this evolution: (1) the "infanticidal" mode (through the 4th century, A.D.); (2) the "abandonment" mode (4th to 13th centuries); (3) the "ambivalent" mode (14th to 17th centuries); (4) the "intrusive" mode (18th century); (5) the "socialization" mode (19th - mid-20th centuries); (6) the "helping" mode (mid-20th century -).

Thus, the history of childhood is seen as the history of progressively-lessened child-abuse; with the coming-to-light of DeMause's theory, he seems to be saying, we are reaching the quasi-Hegelian "end" of this history.

In addition to questioning its unabashed ethnocentrism and "present-centeredness," one can also challenge DeMause's theory for not paying heed to the possibly "adaptive" (not necessarily "abusive") functions of the different styles of child-rearing characteristic of different eras. Psychoanalyst Miles Shore notes that, insofar as good parenting should help the child to develop "necessary ego functions such as reality testing and impulse control," that "the effort and the skills [for survival] are hammered out between parents and children as ego functioning develops through limits and love, a mixture of hardship and indulgence."[45] He suggests, in other words, that

DeMause may not recognize the appropriateness of modes of parenting which he categorically dismisses as "abusive" because they do not seem to conform to the "empathic" mode which may be helpful and appropriate in our time and place only.

In addition, Shore brings up some by-now-familiar questions about the validity and reliability of the evidence, and the theme of historicism versus universalism:

> ...in bringing to our attention the brutality, DeMause and his colleagues tend to underplay the sustaining features which must also have been present....That emotional disturbances were not ubiquitous, and that goodness, and truth, and compassion were not first invented in the eighteenth or nineteenth century when, according to DeMause, child rearing showed the first signs of becoming humane, must mean that more positive factors operated alongside the separations and beating. [46]

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3. Socio-Economic Persepctives

In this section I shall focus on several attempts to explore the relationship of demographic/economic/sociological factors to the emergence of modern beliefs and practices concerning the young. As noted in Section 1., one of the chief criticisms of Ariès has been that he did not explicitly consider the influence of such "infrastructural" factors on the history of childhood, instead remaining largely at the level of religious and cultural ideology.

Works such as John Gillis's Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770 - Present, Joseph Kett's Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present, Frank Musgrove's Youth and the Social Order, and articles by David Bakan, John and Virginia Demos, and William Kessen, are all attempts to relate the history of youth to demographic, economic and related influences. To highlight two noteworthy features of these works:

(1) With the exception of Kessen's brief article, they all deal mainly with "youth" and "adolescence" rather than "childhood." Perhaps the relative popularity of this research focus is traceable to the upsurge of interest in adolescence which was generated by social conditions during the late 1960s. In any case, much of the substantive material presented in thie section will therefore also concern youth/adolescence rather than young-childhood. (Books which deal with the connection of 19th-century ideologies of childhood to socio-economic conditions include Bernard Wishy's The Child and the Republic and Ann Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture. These studies of the social background of literary and popular images of children are more restricted in scope and use of evidence than are the more broadly historical and sociological works considered in this section. Nevertheless highly relevant to this project, the work of Wishy and Douglas was included in last spring's paper on child-ideologies in 19th-century America.)

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(2) In general, these studies emphasize the last two or three decades of the 19th century, and the first two decades of the 20th, as being of critical importance for the emergence of modern views and treatment of youth. This chronological perspective is in keeping with their assertion that this entire ideological "evolution" was closely connected to, and to a large extent caused by, the urban-industrial transformation and related demographic and political developments in America and Western Europe, particularly during the late 19th century.

*** *** ***

Although Kett, Gillis, Musgrove et al. have written the history of the transformation from pre-industrial "youth" to late-industrial "adolescence" from different (and occasionally divergent) interpretive angles, some common themes are apparent. Several of the most prominent of these are described below:

First, there is the question of what conditions prevailed in pre-industrial times. John Gillis provides the most developed challenge to Aries's statement that "pre-industrial Europe made no distinction between childhood and other pre-adult stages of life," that "one would leave childhood only by leaving the state of dependence, or at least the lower degrees of dependence."[47] While Aries leaves it at that, Gillis takes this as his point of departure:

> It was precisely in these degrees of dependence that preindustrial society recognized and institutionalized a stage of life that was different from both childhood and adulthood...[48]

This was the long transition period of "youth," spanning from as early as age seven to as late as the mid- or late-twenties (until marriage).

> Here is a stage of life very different from anything we know as 'youth' or 'adolescence' today....it was more drawn out and differently-related to childhood and adulthood....[49]

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"Youth" was characterized by a state of progressively-more-detatched semi-dependence on the family. Individuals at this stage of life were sent away from home to become apprentices, servants or students.

Gillis relates this system of age-group management and relations to a broader socio-economic context:

> The hierarchy of ages -- with childhood, youth and old age placed in various stages of dependence on young adulthood -- was, in fact, a fairly accurate blueprint of preindustrial society's economic, social and political age structure, as that structure was viewed by those with the social and economic power. They prescribed dependence to childhood, semidependence to youth, and retiring senility to old age because, to a large extent, this was the only way the transmission of culture, property and skill from generation to generation could be guaranteed.[50]

The traditional strategy of family survival in pre-industrial Europe, necessitated by the demographic and economic circumstances, dictated high fertility (so that parents might have "peace of mind about their old age and the perpetuation of their property") and restrained expectations for individual children "even into teen age." They also "required the removal of children from their families for that part of their life defined and institutionalized as youth."[51]

He asserts that the population explosion of the mid-18th century "took place initially under the same conditions of high mortality and high fertility that had been characteristic of preindustrial society"[52] (Musgrove[53] and Somerville[54] appear to disagree, contending that a decreased child-mortality rate was responsible for this demographic transformation.) but nevertheless was "of equal importance with the economic changes as a force promoting change in the developmental cycle of the family and, with it, the parameters of childhood, youth and adulthood."[55]

The "economic changes" to which Gillis alludes were, of course, the onset of urbanization-industrialization: "With the decline of the peasant economy, the connection between inheritance and marriage was

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dissolving"[56] (a disruption especially significant for youth) and mass migration to cities began to take place.

Initially, fertility remained high (and infant mortality did not steeply decline during the first decades of the 19th century, particularly among the lower classes), even after the move to the cities. Traditional parental investment strategies vis à vis their offspring appear to have persisted during the early stages of industrial growth. Child labor was not yet heavily or effectively restricted and the young could still fill "mainstream" industrial slots. (Hence the status of post-pubertal "youth" was relatively high during early industrial times.)

As the century progressed, however, new demographic and economic contingencies began to be reflected in changing family and societal strategies towards the young. Gillis asserts that

> The discovery of adolescence belonged essentially to the middle classes, the first group, apart from the aristocracy, to experience a drop in child mortality and the consequences this entailed. The nobility was able to absorb larger numbers of surviving children, because of both its greater wealth and the firm tradition of primogeniture that allocated subordinate roles to younger sons. The middle classes, particularly their professional elements...turned to family limitation as the only way to relieve their burden. Although the actuality of the two-child family was still some way off, the English middle classes, and other groups claimant to that social status, were beginning to adapt it as an ideal in the 1860s and 1870s as a means of bringing into line with their incomes the growing expense of raising and educating children.[57]

Frank Musgrove highlights the fact that as industrialization advanced, "youth" became increasingly marginal in terms of the overall occupational structure -- and, in this sense, their status declined:

> By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the status of the young was being undermined as a consequence of their earlier importance. Their value had resulted in their super-abundance....Not only was there a 'bulge' in young people, but advances in technology were in any case displacing the young worker....Young people were no longer central to the economy. They were moving ever more onto the periphery into marginal and relatively trivial occupations.[58]

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Musgrove suggests that compulsory education in England was "a necessity by the 1870s not because children were at work, but because, increasingly, they were not"[59] -- as a means, therefore, of exerting social control over a large, occupationally-marginal population. (In last spring's papers on the transformations in child-ideologies in Europe and America I suggested additional domestic and international conditions which appear to have contributed to the introduction of compulsory education in these countries -- in England, extension of the franchise and fear of international competition on both military and technological fronts; in the U.S., the need to socialize and control growing immigrant populations.) He contends that "the invention of adolescence" was therefore a response to the creation of a population which needed to be placed under effective surveillance and social control.

Joseph Kett writes about America during that same critical period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He holds that the key to explaining the modern conception of adolescence (and we can perhaps extend some of these conclusions to help understand the emergence of modern childhood as well)

> ...lies in economic history -- specifically, in changes in family strategy dictated by the sharp rise in the number of salaried, white-collar employees....The industrial revolution in America increased the number of salaried professional managers, salesmen and clerks. In the late 19th century, the differentiation of economic opportunities available to middle-class and working-class families had compelled middle-class families to place their children on the track of formal education beyond puberty....The new middle-class....looked to a future in which its children....had to be prepared for roles in complex organizations in which they, like their parents, would be associates rather than leaders.[60]

Kett points out that "in America, Britain and German the two decades after 1900 witnessed the appearance of both the institutions and psychology that were to govern the social treatment of youth for much of the 20th century." Yet within this uniform trend he notes differing

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socio-cultural particulars:

> ...in no two countries did either the experience or the institutions of adolescence take the same form. To grasp this one has only to compare the primitivism and alienation of the German Wandervogel movement... with the conformist nationalism and boyish cheerfulness of the British Boy Scouts or with the coeducational sociability of the American high school. Further, although the middle class played the key role in shaping the institutions of adolescence from nation to nation, the history of the middle class differed from country to country. In America a potent middle class produced during these decades the Progressive reform movement, marked by purpose, optimism, and even a streak of utopianism, qualities that bore little resemblance to the anxieties of the German middle class, trapped between a threatening proletariat on one side and a hostile aristocracy on the other. And even in America the massive reclassification of young people as adolescents and the creation of institutions to segregate them from casual contacts with adults were not the results of a clear and consistent social movement but of a coalition of different types of people with different and often conflicting motives.[61]

*** *** ***

Since in this section of the paper, most of the attention has been focused on "youth" and "adolescence," I have separated William Kessen's article, "The American Child and Other Cultural Inventions," and saved it for last, because he brings us back to the subject of childhood -- specifically, the relation of the development of American child psyhology to certain socio-economic factors. (See last spring's paper on the emergence of the Child Study Movement for a fuller discussion of this topic.)

Kessen stresses that the industrialization of America led to the "feminization" of home, church -- and children. (For an exposition of this theme as presented in the work of Wishy and Douglas, see last year's paper on America.) Kessen cites "three interwoven strands of the changes that touched children": (1) With "the evolving separation of the domain of work from the domain of home....women left or were

excluded from the industrial work force in the 1830s and 1840s." (2) "the second and entailed change was the radical separation of what a man was from what a woman was" — the masculine domain being the public, aggressive world of business, increasingly contrasted against the private, softer, moral-religious realm of the home. (3) "Following on the first two changes...children continued to be cared for by women at home, and in consequence they took on the coloration of mother, hearth and heaven." [62]

Kessen concludes that "the sentimentalization of children...was strongly influential in what can only be called a salvationist view of children."[63] In this and other ways, this sentimentalizing trend "had implications for family structure, education and the definition of the child in expert writings that we have not yet,,,fully understood or confronted." [64]

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Conclusion

In his article, "Toward a History of Childhood," Philip Stewart asserts that "the integrated history of the family and the child toward which we hopefully are moving would result from a synthesis in which intellectual history, literary history and scientific history would each illuminate the others."[65] As was suggested in the introduction of this paper, this necessarily interdisciplinary character of the history of childhood and youth presents special challenges to the would-be synthesist, since different traditions of inquiry and interpretation generate different research questions and, in attempted answer to them, correspondingly divergent versions of the past and ot its relationship to the present. Yet such triangulation of evidence is crucial, since, as Stewart points out, "No research method will provide enough data to construct for an era the same kind of interpretive model that an anthropologist can deduce in describing a society...there to be observed."[66]

Richard Vann notes that certain key issues in demographic history have recently been scrutinized in a new light, resulting in new interpretations of the causes of the demographic transition, and of the relation of the history of the family to industrialization. He suggests that "weaving all these findings into a new interpretive framework will be required before a new history of childhood can be convincing."[67] Nevertheless, cultural and historical diversity cannot be explained by demographics alone. For example, demographer Etienne van de Walle points out that generalizations we can make about demographic conditions prior to the 19th century "hardly allow us to differentiate among all societies in that largest part (by far) of human history when mortality and fertility were high."[68]

The works which seem to have achieved the best integration to date of demographic, socio-economic, political and cultural factors are Gillis's book on the history of youth groups in modern Western Europe,

and Kett's study of the emergence of "adolescence" over the course of American history. While emphasizing the central importance of economic and demographic conditions and transitions, they nevertheless retain an appreciation of the cultural complexities which interacted with (rather than were simply "determined" by) the urban-industrial transformation.

1. Vann, p. 295.
2. Ibid., p. 297.
3. Aries, Centuries of Childhood, p. 128.
4. Hunt, p. 34.
5. Aries, p. 39.
6. Aries, p. 128.
7. Ibid, p. 130.
8. Ibid., p. 411.
9. Ibid., p. 412.
10. Hunt, p. 32.
11. Aries, p. 411.
12. Aries, pp. 128 - 129.
13. Ibid., pp. 131 - 132.
14. Ibid., p. 130.
15. Ibid., pp. 132 - 133.
16. Ibid.
17. Aries, "At the Point of Origin," p. 15.
18. Ibid., p. 15.
19. Ibid., pp. 17 - 18.
20. Hunt, pp. 34 - 35.

20a. Aries, Centuries..., pp. 267 - 268.

21. Hunt, pp. 35 - 36.
22. Aries, p. 413.
23. Hunt, p. 36.
24. Hunt, p. 37.
25. Aries, pp. 414 - 415.
26. Davis, pp. 54 - 55.
27. Stewart, "Towards a History of Childhood," p. 199.
28. Holmes, p. 165.
30. Wilson, p. 146.
31. Ibid., p. 140.
32. ibid., p. 144.
33. Vann, p. 295.
34. Wilson, p. 142.
35. Demos, pp. 315 - 316.
36. Ibid., p. 327.
37. Keniston, p. 335.
38. Ibid., p. 341.

39. Keniston, p. 341.
40. Ibid., p. 342.
41. Ibid., pp. 343 - 344.
42. Ibid., p. 333.
43. Hunt, p. 46.
44. Shore, p. 495.
45. Ibid., p. 499.
46. Ibid., p. 501.
47 Gillis, Youth and History, p. 2
48. Ibid., p. 2.
49. Ibid., pp. 2 - 3.
50. Ibid., p. 5.
51. Ibid., p. 41.
52. Ibid., p. 39.
53. Musgrove, pp. 60 = 61.
54. Somerville, The Rise and Fall of Childhood, p. 150.
55. Gillis, p. 35.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., pp. 98 - 99.
58. Musgrove, pp. 72 - 73.
59. Ibid., p. 76.
60. Kett, pp. 233 - 234.
61. Ibid., p. 216.
62. Kessen, p. 817.
63. Ibid., p. 818.
64. Ibid., p. 817.
65. Stewart, "Toward a history of Childhood and Youth," p. 206.
66. Ibid., p. 206.
67. Vann,. p. 296.
68. van de Walle, p. 359.

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